

# Responsible Missourians Initiative

## For Grades 9–12

### Initiative Overview:

The focus of this initiative by Secretary of State Matt Blunt is to teach Missouri's young people about the importance of participation in our democratic republic, and the importance of taking ownership and interest in community and current events. The 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade packet contains lessons to enhance teacher-led discussions about citizenship, responsibility and Missouri government. For additional information about voting and Missouri's government, history and heritage, visit the Missouri Secretary of State Internet site at [www.sos.mo.gov](http://www.sos.mo.gov)

This lesson complements MAP and Show-Me Standards in Social Studies and Communication Arts. A breakdown of the relevant strands and standards may be found on page 21.

### Instructional Procedures for 9th Grade through 12th Grade Students:

**There are seven components of this lesson plan:**

- ◆ A lesson reviewing youth volunteerism and statistics and charts on youth voting since the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1971, lowering the legal voting age to 18
- ◆ A lesson on the history of voting and participation in American democracy
- ◆ Lessons on the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in a democracy
- ◆ A class discussion on the importance of young people volunteering and taking ownership on issues affecting their government and communities
- ◆ A class discussion on becoming informed on candidates, political parties, issues, and current events
- ◆ A lesson on Missouri government information on page 3
- ◆ A class project/assignment on topics to increase awareness of the importance of participation in American democracy

1) Begin the lesson with a teacher-led discussion based on the prepared summaries "Youth Voter Participation Statistics and Trends Since the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment Was Passed in 1971" and "Youth Volunteer Trends," on pages 11 and 12. Explain the trends among young voters age 18–24 in the United States and the importance of youth participation in American democracy. Open the discussion for student input and questions.

2) Distribute copies of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments and the packet of statistics on youth voter participation and reasons for the lack of participation and voter apathy from studies. Please refer to the material on page 8 that lists the events leading up to the passage of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the acquisition of voting rights for women and minorities.

3) Students should read the amendments and look over the statistics and the surveyed reasons behind the statistics. Explain to the students that democracy is not just a right but a responsibility.

4) In class discussions, have students list the reasons stated in the previous teacher-led discussion for the alarming decline in young people's involvement in government, campaigns and

elections, and community. The teacher should lead the discussion based on “Let’s Talk: Discussion Questions for the Responsible Missourians Initiative,” on page 17. Discussion should focus on the decline in voter participation among young people, reasons for this decline, trends associated with volunteerism among young people, and trends associated with community involvement among young people.

5) In a teacher-led discussion, have students state their personal reasons for either being involved or interested in the democratic process, or for not being involved or interested. Discuss ways students can become informed on government issues. Then, review the statistics on volunteerism among adolescents listed on page 12. Discuss the different types of volunteerism and stress how volunteerism contributes to society.

6) Review with students the information about Missouri statewide elected officials, the Missouri General Assembly and the Missouri judiciary system. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of all three.

7) Have students form groups of four or five and complete the projects, exercises and questions based on information from teacher-led discussions and information from handouts.

### **Learning Goals:**

- ◆ To engage students in age-appropriate discussion of the decline in participation in elections among young people
- ◆ To provide students with knowledge and resources needed to increase awareness of government and civic duties
- ◆ To encourage voting in the 18–24 age group

### **Learning Objectives:**

**After this unit, students will be able to—**

- ◆ Trace the voting patterns of 18–24-year-olds since the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1971
- ◆ Understand the reasons behind the decline of participation in government, the elections process, and community among young people ages 18–24
- ◆ Understand and identify the influences on young people ages 18–24 causing the decline in participation
- ◆ Define terms associated with the elections process and government
- ◆ Identify and overcome personal circumstances that may discourage voting and identify and strengthen values, knowledge, and conduct that leads to greater participation
- ◆ Understand the consequences of not participating in democracy and of having others make decisions on issues that will impact the lives of young Missourians

### **Learning Assessment:**

Worksheets accompany the lesson to reinforce the lesson and provide a means of assessment. Students will work in groups to fulfill a project using the information provided to them in this lesson plan.



## **Target level:**

This lesson is aimed at 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. It complements lessons planned around the topics of civic duty, democracy and government.

# **Statewide Elected Officials in Missouri**

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## **Governor**

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In Missouri, the governor is the top elected official in the Executive Branch. The Executive Branch of government is in charge of enforcing laws made by the Legislative Branch. Some of the governor's powers include: choosing directors of state agencies, choosing citizens for boards and official groups, and filling empty positions in county offices. The governor also appoints judges. The governor is the commander in chief of the Missouri National Guard.

Each January the governor delivers a speech called the "State of the State" address to the Missouri Legislature and submits a state budget. After the legislature passes a bill the governor has the power to sign the bill into law or prevent it from becoming a law by vetoing it. When the governor vetoes a bill, the legislature can pass it anyway if 2/3 of the Senate and the House vote for it.

The governor also has the power to pardon individuals who have committed crimes, call special sessions for the legislature, and call out the National Guard for state emergencies.

The Missouri Constitution says the governor must be at least 30 years old, a U.S. citizen for 15 years, and a resident of Missouri for 10 years. The governor may only serve two four-year terms.

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## **Lieutenant Governor**

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The lieutenant governor serves as the president of the Missouri Senate and can vote to break a tie. The lieutenant governor also serves on many boards and official groups.

In case the governor cannot carry out the duties of the office because of death, resignation, disability, or absence, the lieutenant governor becomes the governor. The lieutenant governor is much like the vice-president of the United States. The qualifications for lieutenant governor and governor are the same.

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## **Secretary of State**

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The secretary of state is responsible for many different things in Missouri, all related to providing and preserving information for the public. The secretary of state is in charge of elections, taking care of historic records, overseeing the State Library, the securities industry, and serves as the filing agency for business' records.

The secretary of state is the guardian of the Great Seal of the State of Missouri, and validates official documents of the governor. The office also publishes the Official Manual of the State of Missouri, nicknamed the “blue book.”

Before being elected the secretary of state must be a Missouri resident for one year. There are no limits to the number of terms that a secretary of state can serve.

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### **Auditor**

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The state auditor is responsible for inspecting the finances of all state agencies, boards and official groups, as well as some counties in Missouri. Citizens may ask the auditor to inspect a local government. Audits are performed to make sure that Missouri citizens’ tax dollars are used responsibly. The auditor is nicknamed the “watchdog” for taxpayers.

The qualifications for state auditor and governor are the same.

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### **Treasurer**

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The state treasurer is the guardian of the state’s money. The treasurer manages and invests the state’s money. The treasurer also handles the Unclaimed Property Program, which attempts to return forgotten funds deposited in banks to their owners.

The treasurer has the same requirements as the secretary of state, but is limited to serving two four-year terms.

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### **Attorney General**

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The attorney general serves as the lawyer for the state, representing the interests of Missouri government agencies and its citizens. The attorney general also gives legal advice to statewide officers such as the governor and secretary of state, as well as the legislature, and other state and local government agencies.

The attorney general must be an attorney and must live in Jefferson City while in office.

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### **Missouri Legislature**

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The Missouri legislature, known as the General Assembly, is composed of two “houses.” The upper house is called the Senate, and the lower and larger of the two is called the House of Representatives. The legislature is in session from January to May each year.

Each house decides its own rules and procedures and is required to keep a daily record of its work. The General Assembly discusses important issues facing the state. They address some of these issues by writing bills which can change or create laws. The governor must sign a bill in order for it to become a law.



## **Senate**

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There are 34 members in the Senate, who each represent about 155,000 people. Senate terms are four years, with one-half of the Senate up for election every two years. Senate candidates must be at least 30 years of age, a qualified Missouri voter for three years, and a resident of their district for at least one year.

When the lieutenant governor is not presiding over the Senate, the president pro tem, elected by the members of the Senate, presides over the Senate most of the time and is the Senate's main officer.

The Senate also approves most of the appointments made by the governor to head state agencies and to serve on state boards and commissions.

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## **House of Representatives**

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The House of Representatives has 163 members, who each represent about 31,000 people. House terms are for two years. House candidates must be at least 24 years of age, a qualified voter of the state for two years, and a resident of their district for at least one year.

The speaker of the House, elected by the members of the House, presides over the House and is its main officer.

# The Missouri Judicial System

The judicial branch of Missouri government has three levels: circuit, appeals and supreme. All judges must be licensed to practice law in Missouri and are required to retire at age 70.

At the trial level are the circuit and associate circuit courts. Missouri has 45 judicial circuits, divided along county lines. Every circuit contains at least one circuit judge and at least one associate circuit judge for each county within the circuit. Associate circuit judges must be at least 25 years of age, a qualified voter of Missouri, and a resident of the county. Circuit judges must be at least 30 years of age, a citizen of the United States at least 10 years, a qualified voter of Missouri at least three years, and a resident of the circuit at least one year. Circuit judges have six-year terms, while associate circuit judges have four-year terms. Circuit courts handle civil and criminal trials.

The next level is the appellate court. There are three appeals court districts in Missouri, located in St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield. The courts of appeals hear cases from lower courts whose decisions have been appealed and which are not reserved exclusively for the Missouri Supreme Court. Appeals court judges must be at least 30 years old, residents of their district, U.S. citizens for at least 15 years, and Missouri voters for nine years before their selection. Appellate judges are appointed, and then retained by a favorable vote of the people every 12 years.

The Missouri Supreme Court, the state's highest court, hears cases appealed from the courts of appeals or those involving the death penalty, a U.S. treaty or statute, the Missouri Constitution, the state's revenue laws, and the title to any state office. The Supreme Court also supervises all lower courts in the state.

There are seven judges on the Supreme Court, which have the same qualifications and terms as appeals court judges. The chief justice position is rotated between members every two years.

## **Amendment XXVI**<sup>1</sup>

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## **Amendment XIX**

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## **Amendment XV**

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

<sup>1</sup>) <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.amendmentxxvi.html>

## History of U.S. Voting laws <sup>1</sup>

- 1778–1860:** Under the U.S. Constitution, the basic regulation of voting was left up to the states; voting may have been restricted to males, whites, property owners
- 1868:** 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified: made former slaves citizens and gave them full civil rights
- 1870:** 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified: prohibited using racial discrimination to deny anyone the right to vote
- 1920:** 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified: gave women the right to vote
- 1964:** Voting Rights Act passed: prohibited use of literacy tests in many Southern states and gave federal government power to ensure minorities were not prevented from registering to vote
- 1970:** Voting Rights Act amended: made literacy tests illegal in all states
- 1971:** 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified: lowered the voting age to 18 for all state and national elections

## The Right to Vote was Earned <sup>2</sup>

Between the years of 1955–1965, the Civil Rights Movement in America was in full swing. After nearly a decade of events such as “sit-ins” to overturn the “Jim Crow” laws, which segregated people by race in hotels, restaurants, and most other public forums, protests, and boycotts, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It nullified local laws and practices that prevented minorities from voting. Prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, in some areas of the South, blacks were not allowed to vote, and blacks who attempted to register to vote or organize or assist others to attempt to register to vote risked losing their homes, their jobs, and in some cases, their lives. The struggle to obtain voting rights for minorities was great, in terms of time and lives lost in the process. The United States Constitution guarantees the permanent voting rights of African Americans as a result of these strong efforts.

1) *Mid-Valley Online Support Pages.* Newspapers in Education. Lee Enterprises. 2002. <http://www.mvonline.com/nie/aba-guide/responsibility.html>

2) *The Civil Rights Movement 1955-1965: Introduction Home Page.* Cozzens, Lisa. 22 Jun. 1998. <http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/index.html>

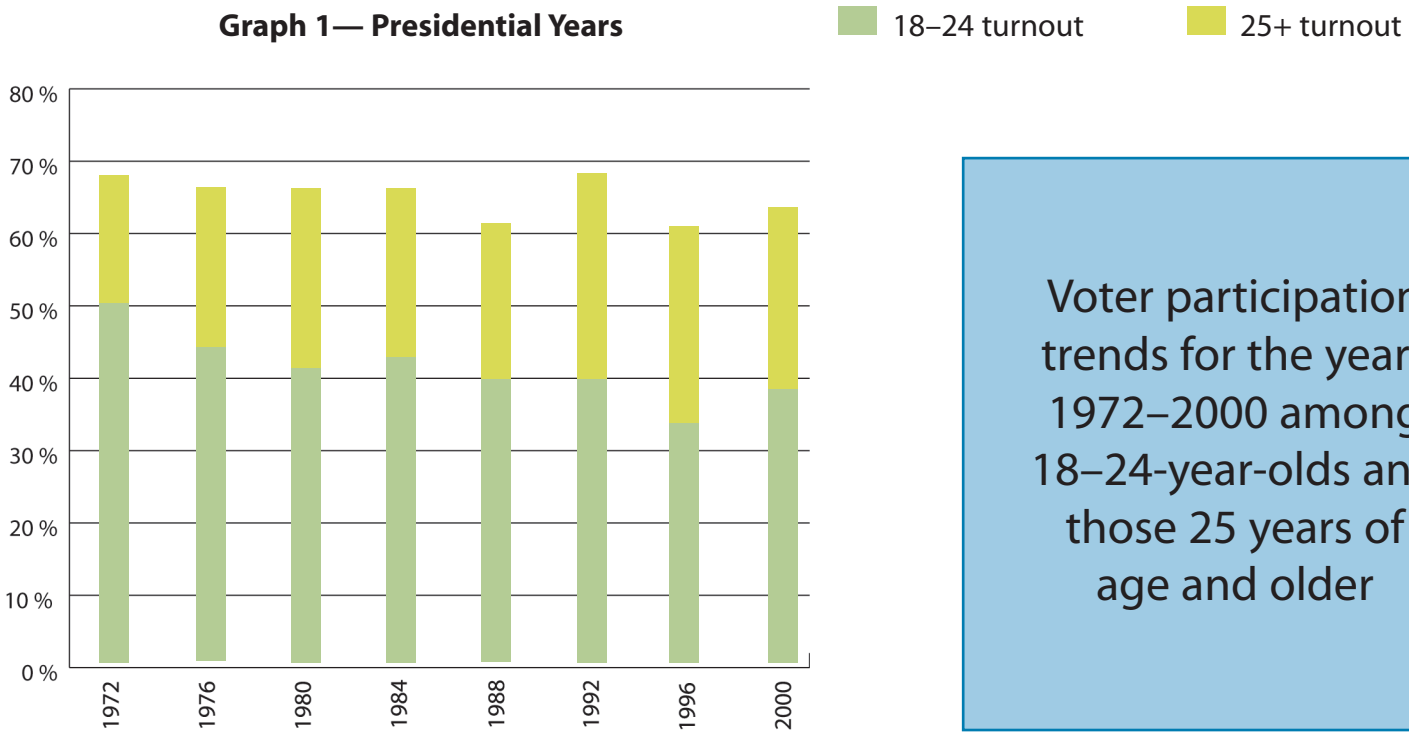
*AFRO-AMERICAN ALMANAC-African-American History Resource.* United States Department of Justice. 2 Apr. 1998. <http://www.toptags.com/aama/voices/commentary/voting.htm>

*National Museum of American History: Timeline.* Smithsonian Institute. 2003. <http://americanhistory.si.edu/timeline/07sitin.htm>



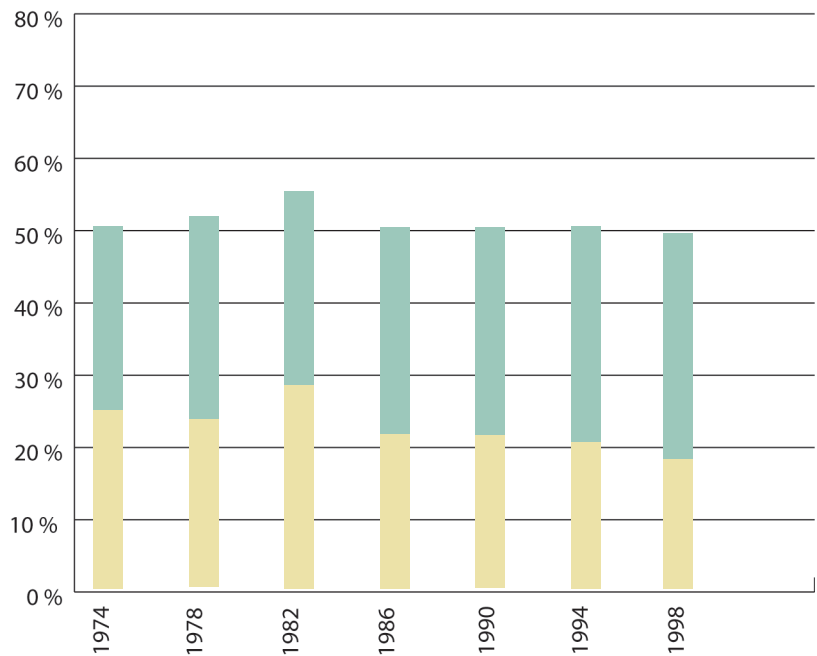


**Graph 1— Presidential Years**



18–24 turnout 25+ turnout

**Graph 2— Alternate Years**



Source: Data courtesy of The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

## Glossary of Terms<sup>1</sup>

**citizenship**—the quality of an individual's response to membership in a community.

**civic duty**—the duty of every individual toward their community and government.

**civics**—a social science dealing with the rights and duties of citizens.

**community**—a unified body of individuals.

**current event**—an event that is deemed important enough to make the news; affects many citizens' lives.

**democracy**—a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

**Election Day**—a day legally established for the election of public officials; the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in an even year designated for national elections in the U.S. and observed as a legal holiday in many states.

**government**—the organization, machinery, or agency through which a political unit exercises authority and performs functions and which is usually classified according to the distribution of power within it.

**political campaign**—1. a race between candidates for elective office 2. the campaign of a candidate to be elected.

**politics**—the art or science of government; competition between competing interest groups or individuals for power and leadership (as in a government).

**poll worker**—a person who staffs the polls on Election Day.

**polling place**—the voting place designated for all voters residing in one or more precincts for any election.

**precinct**—the geographical areas into which the election authority divides its jurisdiction for the purpose of conducting elections.

**responsibility**—moral, legal, or mental accountability.

**right**—a freedom given to citizens by the constitution.

**volunteer**—a person who voluntarily (proceeding from the will or from one's own choice or consent) undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.

**vote**—to express one's views in response to a poll; to exercise a political franchise.

**voter apathy**—a lack of feeling or emotion towards voting resulting in a decline in voter participation.

**15th Amendment**—Passed in 1870, gave blacks the right to vote

**19th Amendment**—Passed in 1920, gave women the right to vote

**26th Amendment**—Passed in 1971, lowered the legal voting age in the United States to 18.

1) Merriam-Webster Online. The Language Center. 2003. <http://www.m-w.com/netdict.htm>  
The World Encyclopedia

## Youth Voter Participation Statistics and Trends Since the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment was Passed in 1971

According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), shortly after 18-year-olds acquired the right to vote in 1971, there has been a rapid decline in voting among this age group. According to the same survey, in the 1972 presidential election, 50% of 18–24-year-olds voted. In the 2000 presidential election, only 33% of 18–24-year-olds voted. In 1988, 36% of 18–24-year-olds voted, and only 32% exercised their right to vote in 1996.<sup>1</sup> Turnout in 1998 among 18–24-year-olds is estimated to have been below 20%.<sup>2</sup>

In four of the seven presidential elections since 1972, turnout among 18–24-year-olds reached new lows.<sup>3</sup>

Despite efforts to make registering to vote easier, only 49% of 18–24-year-olds were registered to vote in 1996.<sup>4</sup>

Studies suggest that young people from households that vote and talk about government, politics and current events are more likely to vote. Also, a college degree holder is more likely to vote than a high school graduate. Studies also suggest that young people, who read newspapers, see and hear broadcast news and talk about current events with others are more likely to cast a ballot.<sup>5</sup>

**Studies show that events such as 9/11 and the war in Iraq have led to increased interest and involvement among young people in their communities. One survey conducted in fall 2002 stated that the number of students who participated in a political rally or demonstration increased by 15%. Politics is deemed more important to young people's lives.**<sup>6</sup>

**While only 32% of 18–24-year-olds voted in the 2000 election, 59% of the respondents to a recent study said they will "definitely be voting" in the 2004 presidential election. Twenty-seven percent said their chances of voting are 50-50, or that they will not vote.**<sup>7</sup>

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1) *NASS Survey on Youth Attitudes*. The Tarrance Group. National Information Consortium. 2000. <http://www.stateofthevote.org/survey/sect2.htm>

2) See note 1, above

3) *New Millennium Young Voters Project. New Millennium Survey*. National Information Consortium. 2000. National Association of Secretaries of State. <http://www.stateofthevote.org/mediakit.html>

4) See note 1, above

5) See note 1, above

6) *Campus Kids: The New Swing Voter*. Harvard University Institute of Politics. 2002. <http://www.iop.harvard.edu/2003survey.pdf>

7) See note 6, above

## Youth Volunteer Trends

According to surveys, today's 18–24-year-olds are more likely to volunteer in their communities than ten years ago. Fifty-three percent of 18–24-year-olds said they volunteer on a regular basis for personal gains. Unfortunately, very few said they volunteer in politics or government realms.<sup>1</sup> According to studies done by NASS, data show convincing majorities of young people have donated to a community church (89%), helped an elderly or disabled neighbor (87%), played in organized sports (69%), volunteered at a religious organization (59%), joined a non-political organization (64%), or volunteered in the community (53%).<sup>2</sup> In comparison, less than one-third had written a letter to a newspaper or government official (30%), run for an elected leadership position (24%), participated in a political march or demonstration (16%), volunteered in a political campaign (16%), or joined a political or government organization (14%).<sup>3</sup>

Non-political volunteerism is more common than political volunteerism due to the negative attitudes that young people hold about politicians and the political process.<sup>4</sup>

Volunteerism is an important aspect of citizenship and community for several key reasons. Volunteerism raises awareness of current issues, creates interest, and contributes to the betterment of society.<sup>5</sup>

Studies show that young people who have parents who vote, or who talk about politics with their parents, are more likely to volunteer and share their opinions on current issues and events.<sup>6</sup>

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1) *New Millennium Young Voters Project. New Millennium Survey.* National Information Consortium. 2000. National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). <http://www.stateofthevote.org/mediakit.html>

2) *See note 1, above*

3) *See note 1, above*

4) *See note 1, above*

5) *Youth Voters.* 24 Oct. 2002. The Center for Voting and Democracy. [http://www.fairvote.org/turnout/youth\\_voters.htm](http://www.fairvote.org/turnout/youth_voters.htm)  
*Youth Voting Fact Sheet.* Youth Vote Coalition. March 2002. <http://www.youthvote2000.org/info/factsheet.htm>  
*See note 1, above*

6) *NASS Survey on Youth Attitudes.* The Tarrance Group. National Information Consortium. 2000.  
<http://www.stateofthevote.org/survey/sect2.htm>

## Ways to Get Involved and Participate

- Volunteer in a local campaign
- Register to vote when 18
- Vote when 18 and in all subsequent elections
- Acquire an internship with state government to earn money or class hours
- Serve as a poll worker if 18 or older
- Encourage voting by parents, family, and friends who are 18 or older
- Talk to friends, family, and parents about candidates and current events
- Attend candidate and issue forums
- Join a club
- Pay attention to political advertising
- Read newspapers
- Watch and listen to the news on television and radio
- Surf the Internet for current events
- Visit Internet sites of your elected officials
- Visit campaign Internet sites for more information

## WHO may register to vote in Missouri?

Citizens living in Missouri must register in order to vote. Any U.S. citizen 17 years and 6 months of age, or older, if a Missouri resident, may register and vote, except:

- A person who is adjudged incapacitated
- A person who is confined under sentence of imprisonment
- A person who is on probation or parole after conviction of a felony until finally discharged
- A person after conviction of a felony or misdemeanor connected with the right of suffrage (RSMo §115.133)

## HOW and WHERE may Missourians register?

Qualified citizens may register in person at the office of their local election authority, by mail, at the driver's license office, or at other participating state agencies. Registering in person is accomplished by filling out registration forms with information on identity, residence and qualifications that are signed and sworn to, then witnessed by the election authority or a designee (§ 115.155, RSMo Supp. 1997).

Registration by mail, when renewing a driver's license or at participating state agencies, requires submission of an application stating qualifications. A verification or rejection of registration is sent by the election authority to the applicant (§§ 115.155 & 115.159, RSMo Supp. 1997).

## **Miscellaneous Election Terms**

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**Primary election**—An election that allows members of political parties to select their nominees for public offices. The winners of primary elections face nominees of other parties in the general election.

**Special election**—An election held to fulfill the unexpired term of a public office due to the death, resignation, impeachment, or vacancy for any cause by an elected official.

**General election**—An election held to select candidates for public offices.

**Absentee ballot**—A ballot given to a registered voter who cannot vote on Election Day due to absence, incapacity, religious beliefs, employment as an election authority, or military service commitments.

**Provisional ballot**—A ballot given to a voter whose name does not appear on their assigned precinct register and whose eligibility cannot be determined. If the voters registration and eligibility is confirmed the provisional vote is tallied with the regular ballots, if the voter is found to be ineligible the ballot is discarded.

**Voting Systems used in Missouri**—Punch card, Optical Scan and Paper.

## 2003 Missouri Election Calendar

Official Election Day	Style of Election	Last Day to Register to Vote	First Day for Candidate Filing	Last Day for Candidate Filing	Final Certification Date
<b>February 4, 2003</b>	Available for public elections	January 8, 2003	October 22, 2002	November 19, 2002	November 26, 2002
<b>March 4, 2003</b> (see charter)	Charter cities and charter counties <b>ONLY</b>	February 5, 2003	November 19, 2002	December 17, 2002	December 24, 2002
<b>April 8, 2003</b>	General Municipal Election Day	March 12, 2003	December 24, 2002	January 21, 2003	January 28, 2003
<b>June 3, 2003</b>	Available for public elections	May 7, 2003	February 18, 2003	March 18, 2003	March 25, 2003
<b>August 5, 2003</b>	Available for public elections	July 9, 2003	April 22, 2003	May 20, 2003	May 27, 2003
<b>November 4, 2003</b>	Available for public elections	October 8, 2003	July 22, 2003	August 19, 2003	August 26, 2003

## 2004 Missouri Election Calendar

Official Election Day	Style of Election	Last Day to Register to Vote	First Day for Candidate Filing	Last Day for Candidate Filing	Final Certification Date
February 3, 2004	Available for public elections	January 7, 2004	October 14, 2003 (Jurisdictions in Kansas City begin filing October 21, 2003)	November 18, 2003	November 25, 2003
February 3, 2004	Presidential Primary	January 7, 2004	October 21, 2003	November 18, 2003	November 25, 2003
March 2, 2004 (see charter)	Charter cities and charter counties <b>ONLY</b>	February 4, 2004	November 11, 2003 (Jurisdictions in Kansas City begin filing November 18, 2003)	December 16, 2003	December 23, 2003
April 6, 2004	General Municipal Election Day	March 10, 2004	December 16, 2003 (Jurisdictions in Kansas City begin filing December 23, 2003)	January 20, 2004	January 27, 2004
June 8, 2004	Available for public elections	May 12, 2004	February 17, 2004 (Jurisdictions in Kansas City begin filing February 24, 2004)	March 23, 2004	March 30, 2004
August 3, 2004	Primary Election	July 7, 2004	February 24, 2004	March 30, 2004	May 25, 2004
November 2, 2004	General Election	October 6, 2004	July 13, 2004* (Jurisdictions in Kansas City begin filing July 20, 2004)	August 17, 2004	August 24, 2004

\*Opening of filing for jurisdictions other than state and counties that are electing officers.



## **Discussion Questions for the Responsible Missourians Initiative**

### **When was the 26th Amendment passed and what did it do?**

The 26th Amendment was adopted in 1971. It lowered the legal voting age in the United States to 18.

### **What has happened with participation among 18–24-year-olds since the 26th Amendment?**

Participation among 18–24-year-olds steadily declined soon after the 26th Amendment was adopted in 1971. In 1972, the first time people 18 and older could vote, for president, 50% of 18–24-year-olds cast their ballots. A mere 32% of people 18 and older voted in the 1996 presidential election. See graph on page 9.

### **What factors are contributing to the decline in voting by 18–24-year-olds?**

The main reason young people give for not voting is that they do not think anyone is listening to them. Other reasons for not voting include distrust of politicians and government, a belief that “one vote doesn’t matter,” a lack of information about candidates and issues, and a belief that politicians do not care about issues that affect young people.

### **Why is it important to reverse the current trend of low voting and apathy among 18–24-year-old citizens?**

Americans 18–24-years-old are the future of Missouri and America. American freedom and democracy are the priceless birthright of every American. Our youth need to reconnect with public life and politics, to ensure a productive and stable future for themselves, our state and nation. Voting is the most important civic act of a citizen. It is how we choose our leaders and share our opinions on important federal, state and local issues. If current trends continue, young people in the 18–24-year-old age group will not influence issues that will affect their lives now and in the future.

### **Why is it important to be involved in one’s community?**

It is important to be involved in one’s community through volunteerism. The most vivid evidence of the disconnect between community and political involvement is the drop-off between young people who say they have recently joined a non-political club or organization (64%) and those who say they have joined a political organization (14%). Notably, youth subgroups most likely to join clubs, political or non-political, share a demographic profile. They tend to be better-educated, regular Internet users and have higher levels of interest and knowledge about politics. Still, the findings show that these demographic characteristics alone do not translate automatically into participation in democracy and community. As a statistical matter, the most active young people tend to be well-informed on issues, and vote more often than their peers.

## Why is it important to be informed about current events?

It is important to be informed about current events in order to have a better understanding of issues, events, and people who shape our world. Those who have a better understanding of current events are more likely to participate in elections and take an active role in their communities.

## What can young people do to increase participation among themselves, peers, friends, and family?

- ◆ Discuss current events, issues and politics
- ◆ Encourage those around them to register to vote, and participate in elections; volunteer in school and community organizations
- ◆ Work as a poll worker or Election Day volunteer if 18 and encourage others to do the same
- ◆ During elections stay informed on candidates, issues and political debates

## Design an Advertising Campaign for a Political Party or Government Organization

**Objective:** In groups of four or five, design an advertising campaign to increase voter turnout for a political or government organization to air on MTV and at movie theaters nationwide. Start by taking a group vote on designing the advertising campaign. If your group chooses a political campaign, the advertisement could be for a candidate or campaign issue. If your group chooses a government organization as its “client,” the advertising campaign could focus on government organizations, or laws being made.

**Target:** Your age group

**Resources:** Write public service announcements encouraging or discouraging something in particular; for example, see MTV’s “Rock the Vote,” commercials on television. Come up with a catchy slogan that will take the nation by storm! Create a website to spread the message. Make posters that businesses will display.

**Product:** When finished, all groups will present their ad campaigns to the entire class.

## Demonstrate a Live Skit of Election Day at the Polls

Perform an in-class skit to demonstrate voting on Election Day. Set up a polling place with poll workers, voters and a county clerk, or a local election official. Set up a line of voters waiting their turn, a table of poll workers verifying voter eligibility at that particular polling place, and a county clerk or local election official to watch over the process. Explain to the class the steps a voter takes to cast a ballot at the polling place. Stress the process, in order to provide students the knowledge of what to expect and to familiarize them with the steps required at the polling place.

Following this lesson, teachers should encourage students 18 and older to register to vote, and to provide proof that they did so, enabling them to participate in the 2004 elections.

## **Additional Questions Based on the Responsible Missourians Initiative**

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*How do I register to vote?*

*Where do I register to vote?*

*How do I find out where I cast my vote?*

*When is Election Day?*

*What is Election Day?*

*What is a primary election?*

*What is a special election?*

*What is a general election?*

*What is an absentee ballot?*

*What is a provisional ballot?*

*How do I change my voter registration if I move i.e., college?*

*What are the different types of voting systems used in Missouri?*

*What issues are of interest/most importance to you?*

*What would motivate you to vote for a particular candidate or issue?*

*What issues would you like to see politicians address more often?*

*What is your most important civic duty/responsibility? Why?*

*If not 18, do you plan on registering to vote and voting when you turn 18? Why/ why not?*

*Does your family vote?*

*Do you talk with your parents or friends about politics, government and current events?*

# **Secretary of State Matt Blunt's Responsible Missourians Initiative and the Missouri Department of Education's Framework for Curriculum Development in Social Studies and Communication Arts \*** **(preparing students for the MAP test)**

\*complete framework available on-line at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us>

**Relevant discussion questions for grades 9-12 from each of the four strands:**

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## **Social Studies**

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### **◆ Strand 1 ◆**

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#### **Why have people established governance systems?**

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##### **I.A Civic-Political Perspective:**

- What are competing ideas regarding purposes of governments and other governance systems? What purposes should governance systems serve?
- How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited among the levels of government established by the United States Constitution? How are the local, state, and national governments organized in the United States?
- How do people attain positions of power and leadership in governance systems? What factors support or limit their power?
- What values and principles are basic to American democracy? Where may they be found? How do/should they impact government?
- Why do democratic values and principles sometimes come into conflict with one another? How do/should governments and citizens deal with such issues?

##### **I.B Social-Cultural Perspective:**

- What are common characteristics of all governance systems?
- How do distinctive aspects of cultures influence the development, operations, and decisions of their government systems?
- How do decisions of governance systems affect individuals, groups, and society?
- What social problems have governance systems tried to resolve? What have been the results of their efforts? How should those results be judged?
- What social conditions do democracies need in order to flourish?

##### **I.C Historical Perspective:**

- How have political philosophies and ideologies emerged and influenced historical developments in differ-

ent political systems?

- What major purposes of government may be inferred from such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and other political writings?
- How have democratic ideals and their observance changed over time and influenced events in the history of the U.S. and other nations?
- How have the qualifications, rights, and responsibilities of citizens and non-citizens of different ethnic and gender groups changed over time in the United States and other places? How has law been used as a mechanism for elevating or restricting minority rights?
- How have changes in technology affected political processes and given rise to political issues? How may some of those issues be analyzed, evaluated, and used to inform decision-making and action-taking on public issues of today?
- What role(s) have individuals, groups, and organizations played in forming and changing governments and political systems? What were their aims and accomplishments?
- Why have there been variations over time with regard to how much people rely on governance systems to make binding decisions affecting their lives?

## ◆Strand 2◆

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### How do individuals relate to and interact with groups?

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#### II.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- How do a society's distinctive characteristics affect its political culture, its political processes, and the issues confronting its people?
- How do relationships vary between civil societies and governments in different nations?
- What major social policy issues confront this and other societies and impact upon politics? What factors complicate simple resolution of those issues? How might those issues be resolved?
- How do laws and government policies affect civil society individuals, and groups?
- How do diverse groups and organizations take conflicting positions and use a variety of strategies in political processes?
- Why are there discrepancies between the ideals and realities in American political and social life? Why have people taken conflicting positions with regard to those disparities? Why may simple solutions be illusive?
- Why do some groups in a society press for change, whereas other groups resist change?

#### II.B Social-Cultural Perspective:

- How does getting older pose opportunities and challenges for individuals, and give rise to social issues?
- How do individuals form into groups to address challenges they face?
- How do young people learn knowledge, skills, and values? How do cultures, subcultures, and groups shape people's thoughts and behavior?
- How do groups influence the thinking and behavior of their members? When is such influence consistent/inconsistent with the common good? What are examples of problems in this area? How may/should

they be addressed?

- What moral, ethical, and legal obligations do people have toward one another in groups and society?
- How may membership in different groups lead to conflicting obligations?
- What is the function of leadership in groups and societies? How do styles of leadership vary? How may leadership be evaluated?
- What consequences follow if a social institution becomes dysfunctional in meeting human needs? How well are a society's institutions fulfilling their social functions?

## II.C Historical Perspective:

- How have major social institutions changed over time? What were causes and results of those changes?
- How have conceptions of the individual's role in society varied and changed over time?
- How have technologies in such areas as communication, transportation, industrial production, and agriculture contributed to social change and given rise to new issues?
- How have the actions of leaders changed social structures, institutions, and relationships among groups within societies?
- What factors have led to change in patterns of cultural diversity and relationships in this and other societies? What have been the consequences and resulting issues?

### ◆ Strand 3 ◆

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How do events and developments in this and other places relate to us and to each other?

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## III.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- What factors shape the public agenda and public opinion? How do/should they influence political events and developments?
- How do decisions of government officials, government agencies, and other governance systems sometimes lead to changes in people's lives?
- How do political and social developments have an impact upon America's democratic ideals?

## III.B Social-Cultural Perspective:

- How are individuals, groups, and institutions coping with change?
- What social issues are confronting this and other cultures? What are their probable causes and effects? How might/should they be addressed?

## III.C Historical Perspective:

- What is the chronological sequence of events we are studying? How do the events relate to one another?
- What are the interrelationships among causes and effects of major historical events and developments? How can we find out what really happened?
- How have individuals influenced events of their times?
- How may knowledge of the histories of this nation help people comprehend the world today and plan for the future?

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## How do the lives of individuals and conditions in society affect each other?

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### **IV.A Civic-Political Perspective:**

- How do concepts of “citizen” and “citizenship” vary among nations?
- What are the personal, political, and economic rights of citizens? What are the sources of those rights? In what historical and contemporary issues are those rights involved?
- What are the personal and civic responsibilities of citizens? When do civic obligations imply that personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good?
- What traits of character and civic dispositions are important to the preservation and improvement of American representative democracy?
- Upon what bases of power do different leaders depend? How should a person’s leadership be evaluated?
- What social issues do citizens and leaders face? How can/should citizens inform themselves, analyze and evaluate issues, and influence public policy making?
- How may citizens strive to achieve personal and social goals by participating in politics and voluntary organizations?
- How can citizens, including high school students, have a positive effect on their communities?

### **IV.B Social-Cultural Perspective:**

- What are examples of personal decisions that have short and long term effects on society? How should such decisions be made and evaluated?
- How do voluntary organizations serve social needs in the local community, state, nation, and world?
- How do political decisions have short and long term effects on the lives of people as individuals, members of groups, and members of society?
- In what ways can citizens, including high school students, work personally or in organizations to promote the common good through community service or political activity?

### **IV.C Historical Perspective:**

- How have the actions of individuals impacted upon the common good of individuals in this and other societies? What were their motives, goals, challenges, and achievements? How should we evaluate their efforts?
- How have responsibilities of private citizens to the common good changed over time in this and other cultures? How have responsibilities of governance systems to the common good changed over time in this and other cultures? What factors have caused those changes?
- How have the rights of citizens changed through the history of the U.S. as the Constitution has been amended and reinterpreted?
- How have conflicting demands of personal responsibility and civic responsibility varied over time in the history of this and other societies?



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## COMMUNICATION ARTS

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### ◆ Strand 1 ◆

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#### Gather, Analyze and Apply Information and Ideas

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- Read, view, listen to, and evaluate written, visual and oral communications.
- Locate and gather information and ideas.
- Process, organize and evaluate information and ideas.

### ◆ Strand 2 ◆

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#### Communicate Effectively Within and Beyond the Classroom

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- Write about, visually represent and discuss written, visual and oral communications.
- Create print and non-print communications to demonstrate understanding of information and ideas.
- Create print and non-print communications for various audiences and for a variety of purposes.
- Create print and non-print communications to publish or formally present information and ideas.
- Participate in informal presentations and discussions.
- Demonstrate proficiency in speaking and writing standard English.

### ◆ Strand 3 ◆

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#### Recognize and Solve Problems

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- Apply communication strategies to identify, understand and solve problems.

### ◆ Strand 4 ◆

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#### Make Decisions and Act as Responsible Members of Society

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- Apply communication skills and strategies to facilitate decision-making.
- Analyze and evaluate decision-making processes involving language use, literature and daily experiences.
- Make informed decisions regarding communications.

# Secretary of State Matt Blunt's Responsible Missourians Initiative and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's *Show-Me Standards for Social Studies and Communication Arts* \*

\* All seven Social Studies Show-Me Standards are available at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/standards/ss.html>

## Social Studies

### Standard #1

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of principles expressed in the documents shaping constitutional democracy in the United States.**

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* places a strategic emphasis on First Amendment rights, and the privilege and responsibility these rights afford young Americans. The voting rights of women and minorities are also emphasized, as much struggle and sacrifice took place to earn those rights for today's young voters.

### Standard #2

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world.**

Secretary of State Matt Blunt feels that a solid understanding of history is an integral part of a well-rounded education and is essential to success in today's global community and economy.

### Standard #3

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of principles and processes of governance systems.**

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* can assist Missouri educators in providing students with the best possible understanding of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Missouri government, as well as the roles of state officers. Also emphasized is the important civic responsibility that falls on young Missourians in the form of volunteer work, education, and voting rights, among other things. Students will learn strategies to become more active citizens, such as reading newspapers or watching and listening to the news to stay informed on current events and contacting lawmakers to make their voices heard on issues that interest them.

### Standard #7

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge**

**of the use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, documents).**

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* uses research and evidence in the form of documented surveys to illustrate to Missouri students the disturbing decline in voter participation over recent years.

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## Communication Arts

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### Standard #3

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency in **reading and evaluating nonfiction works and material (such as biographies, newspapers and technical manuals).**

*The Responsible Missourians Initiative* encourages students to stay informed on current events by reading newspapers and listening to radio and television broadcasts. The Initiative also stresses the importance of getting information on the records of public officials and issues so that informed choices may be made.

### Standard #5

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency in **comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as storytelling, debates, lectures, and multimedia productions).**

*The Responsible Missourians Initiative* encourages students to exchange ideas with one another on ways to become responsible citizens of Missouri and the United States of America.

### Standard #6

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency **in participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas.**

Teacher-led class discussions about citizenship, responsibility, and Missouri government foster an exchange of ideas and opinions on these important subjects.

**In conclusion,** this lesson plan complies with four of the seven Show-Me Standards for social studies and three of the seven Show-Me Standards for Communication Arts.

Students should develop a renewed sense of pride and an interest in taking steps to become responsible, educated citizens.

It is especially important that students become inspired to learn about current events, history,

voting rights, and political issues that may affect them, directly or indirectly.

**Students should come away from the lesson understanding that a democracy is not simply a right for every citizen, but a responsibility.**

### **Sites of Interest for Educators and Students**

**Missouri Secretary of State's Internet Site:** <http://www.sos.mo.gov>

An excellent site for learning more about the State of Missouri!

**ABA Division for Public Education: Teachers & Students: Students in Action:**

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/youth/sia/home/html>

Student Central is the place to go for programs, activities, and resources about legal issues and public policies. The glossary can help build your vocabulary of legal and law-related terms. Or take a quiz to test your knowledge of the law.

**Student Gateway to the U.S. Government:** <http://www.students.gov/>

Students.gov is an excellent resource for students looking for government information and services, on planning and paying for an education, community service, career development, military service, research, reference, and general information on government.

**Center for Civic Education:** <http://www.civiced.org/curriculum.html>

An important, informative website for teachers interested in civic education. To aid educators in teaching effectively the major components of civic education this site offers lesson plans, syllabi, literature, resource material, and more.

**The James F. Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship:** <http://www.edci.purdue.edu/ackerman/>

The James F. Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship's mission is to assume a national leadership role in preparing new generations of American citizens. Focusing on programs, institutes, resources and activities for educators to employ more powerful citizenship programs and opportunities that result in student involvement in schools and communities.

**Constitutional Rights Foundation:** <http://www.crf-usa.org/>

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) seeks to instill in our nation's youth a deeper appreciation of citizenship through values expressed in our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and educate them to become active and responsible members of our society. CRF is dedicated to investing in our youth today, for our country's tomorrow.

**America's Promise Homepage:** <http://www.americaspromise.org/>

Build the character and competence of our nation's youth with people from every sector of American life by fulfilling Five Promises: 1. Caring Adults 2. Safe Places 3. Healthy Start 4. Marketable Skills 5. Opportunities to Serve.

**Corporation for National and Community Service:** <http://www.nationalservice.org/>

The Corporation for National and Community Service helps strengthen communities by engaging Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service.

**National Youth Leadership Council:** <http://www.nylc.org/>

The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) has as its mission to build vital, just communities through service learning with our nation's young people. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service learning and national service, NYLC is a leader in efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

**Learn & Serve America: Corporation for National Service:** <http://www.learnandserve.org/>

The Learn and Serve America: Corporation for National Service guides students to become involved in service they can learn from. Links, information, and resources to projects, scholarships, and grants can be located at this website. This site also recognizes schools and students for outstanding civic service.

**Youth Service America:** <http://www.ysa.org/>

YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA (YSA) is a resource center and premier alliance of more than 300 organizations. The organization is committed to increasing volunteer opportunities to serve locally, nationally or globally.